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The Socialist CALL



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1956

DETROIT THE JOBLESS REAPPEAR

Frank Marquart

WHO IS THE 'NEW NEGRO'?

Martin Luther King

Seven Questions to the Communists

Norman Thomas

THE BASIS OF ASIAN SOCIALISM

U Ba Swe

The Socialist Party of America

Maurice J. Goldbloom

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The Whys and Wherefores of the CALL....

● Although the CALL in its monthly format cannot attempt to keep up with daily developments in the news, the May Day issue of the CALL did contain what in a daily or weekly publication might have been considered a scoop.

● At the very moment when the May Day Call was being distributed, with an article by R. J. Stynes describing the onset of Automation in Britain, the newspapers reported that Britain's first "automation strike" was taking place at the Standard Motor company in Coventry.

● This is the very company at which Mr. Stynes is a shop steward and which he described in the course of his article. Previous to the publication of his article Mr. Stynes had written us for copies of the Socialist Party pamphlet "Robot Revolution" and reported that he had distributed them among his fellow workers.

● Subsequently the term "Robot Revolution" appeared in British newspaper accounts of the strike at Standard. It is likely indeed that the term "Robot Revolution" was picked up from the Socialist Party pamphlet.

● Mr. Stynes was also kind enough to send along his reactions to the SOCIALIST CALL, which he described as a "lively and interesting paper of very great interest to myself and my friends in the labor and trade union movement. Its enlightened and informative articles on both the American and world scene are of particular interest and value here, since the American point of view is not always

THE SOCIALIST CALL

HERMAN SINGER, Editor. MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM, AARON LEVENSTEIN, ROBIN MYERS, NORMAN THOMAS, Associate Editors. ERICH FROMM, PATRICK GORMAN, DONALD HARRINGTON, HARRY W. LAIDLER, Contributing Editors.

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THE SOCIALIST CALL

Volume XXIV

JUNE, 1956

Number 6

clearly understood. The CALL will go into circulation among my colleagues and will thus help promote better Anglo-American relations as a result."

● We are happy to report that we have also received kind words about some of our recent issues from other readers. Hector L. Roberge of Saskatchewan, writes, "Your SOCIALIST CALL is just wonderful. It is most valuable to me and I do not want to miss a single number."

● From the Reverend John Paul Jones of the Union Church of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn: "Just a word to commend you on the May issue of the CALL. It seems to me one of the best you have put out. I especially liked your interpretation of the problems, opportunity and responsibilities in the immediate future, and also your comments about the new look in Russia. Good common sense all the way through."

● Other readers, however have not hesitated to speak up in objecting to what they have read in the CALL. Mrs. Glenn Sloan of Camp Dennison, Ohio, reports that she thought our article on Mayor Zeidler's victory in Milwaukee one-sided. She says she found the article "absorbing," but the treatment was such as to "cause a reader to sigh and flip pages because it sounds like Party propaganda. If the editorial staff of the CALL will make an effort to cut such passages

from the articles the sermonizing will not be missed and the quality of the publication will be better."

* * *

● In our May issue, we reported on the death of Coleman Cheney. We want to take this opportunity to print an excerpt from a memorial Resolution prepared by Cheney's colleagues at Skidmore College, where Cheney was chairman of the Department of Economics:

● "Students admired his ability to deal with his subjects as a way of thinking rather than as material to be memorized, his boundless patience in dealing with each student as an individual to be helped with sensitivity and stimulation. They will remember him as a reliable friend and ready counsellor, with keen and subtle sense of humor. As teacher and faculty member Coleman contributed his full share toward the making of Skidmore a college of distinction.

● "He left a major item of unfinished business—a book to clarify and defend his understanding of socialism. Since it was approaching completion, we have a well-grounded hope that it will eventually be published.

● "He had courage. But the brave are many. It is easiest to be brave when the cause is winning and the tide of affairs is running our way. Few are those who remain loyal to persons and causes, even when they are unpopular or misunderstood."

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An Editorial

The Boom Begins to Crack

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS production records have been extraordinarily high, although there has been a diminution in the boom in the first quarter of 1956. The latter development has been balanced by an unusually vigorous spurt in the production of statements by industry spokesmen regarding their optimistic plans for the future. Although it has not received the accolade of a full-fledged economic law, there seems to be little doubt that declines in actual production are balanced by increases in statements about future massive investments.

Thus, over the past few months spokesmen for the steel industry, the automobile manufacturers and other basic industries have reported extensive plans for new investment. While there is no doubt that segments of these plans will be put into effect, most of them are based on long-term programming. What makes these proposals somewhat less impressive is the fact that even the so-called new capitalism is subject, at decisive points, to short-range interruption, which affects the economy as a whole.

One of these interruptions has developed currently in automobile production. As the article by Frank Marquart in this issue of the CALL makes clear, the lay-offs which have occurred in Detroit over the past few months began immediately to cut deeply into workers' purchasing power. Because the guaranteed annual wage plan has had no opportunity to build up a backlog of funds, its supplementary aid to unemployed auto workers will be at a minimum. Walter Reuther has called for an industry-wide conference to stem the possibility of further unemployment. To this suggestion the new responsible spokesmen for the industry have responded with silence thus far. Actually, under the conditions of capitalist economy, it is difficult to see how they could maintain production in the face of the growth of automobile inventories and in the decided decline in demand for cars.

Reuther is raising a social demand—the right of workers to be gainfully employed—to which even the new capitalists have only an old reply. The silence of the auto industry implies that what will be decisive is not the needs of workers but the kind of effective demand which can be translated into profit.

Although the decline in auto production does not in itself indicate the beginning of the end of the boom, taken together with other recent developments in the economy there is no doubt that an economic transition is in the making. In addition to the drop in automobile sales, the farm recession has continued to deepen despite efforts of both Republicans and Democratic congressmen "to do something for the farmer" in a presidential year. In the first three months of 1956 farmers' net income dropped 30% from 1952. Not even the most optimistic spokesmen of the Department of Agriculture have found it possible to predict that the end of sinking farm income is in sight.

It has been noted too that there has been a general rise in manufacturers' inventories, which have reached an all-time high of \$27.4 billion. To some economists, this is reminiscent of the high level of inventories which prevailed during the recessions of 1948-49 and 1953-54. There is occurring too an enlargement in the debt structure with a particularly sharp rise in consumer debts and non-farm mortgages. One element in the economy, the continuation of new housing starts, which was expected to sustain the boom, has also begun to slip off during the first quarter of 1956.

While there is no agreement among economists as to when a real break in the boom is likely to develop—the range of predictions runs from a mild, gradual slackening to the possibility of a severe break early in the Fall—there is no longer any disagreement as to the fact that the boom itself has reached its peak and that the slide will now be in one direction only. Whatever the precise point at which the boom actually breaks, what is already in evidence is the man-

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ner in which various groups affected by the boom will fare.

Over the past ten years, it has been fashionable to designate the American economy, whether benignly or with distaste, as embodying some aspects of a welfare state. In a special sense this has been true. The government has increased its economic role and is playing still a most important part in the maintenance of the economy, primarily, of course, through continuing expenditure on national defense. 55.6% of the 1957 projected government expenditure goes to maintain major national security requirements. Only 11% is devoted to supporting various labor and welfare expenditures.

In commenting on these proportions the April issue of *Economic Trends and Outlook*, which is published by the AFL-CIO Economic Policy Committee, says, "Regardless of a narrow or broad definition, today's welfare activities of the federal government are hardly more significant than they were in 1939. Considering the single category, labor and welfare, the total dollar spending is actually less than in 1939. If the definition of welfare is broadened to include such other categories as agriculture, natural resources, commerce and housing (almost all of which, however, consists of aid to business rather than welfare items) together with veterans services and benefits, the total spent for these functions has increased but they still constitute a substantially smaller proportion of the non-defense budget than they did in 1939."

This evaluation would indicate that the American welfare state is hardly prepared to introduce even those minimum Keynesian steps which, we have been assured, the modern economy automatically takes in times of economic crisis. What is really new about the new capitalism is its highly developed automotive and electronic techniques, enabling it to turn out a massive flow of goods by mechanical means with an increasing displacement of manpower.

The break in the boom will create for American workers a technological crisis of unprecedented proportions. It is hardly likely that a simple Keynesian formula will be adequate to cope with a crisis of this character. To achieve such a solution may demand that the new technology apply an old socialist formula: Production to satisfy human needs the world over.

Notes of the Month

LIFE AND DEATH IN POLAND... As the process of self-denigration continues in the Soviet Union and

its satellites, there has been thrown up an occasional document which obviously was not inspired by the new Soviet dictum: Be penitent. Such a document was a letter from an eighteen-year old student at the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute which was published in a Polish publication, and subsequently translated in the *New York Times*.

The Polish youth, Michael Bruck, reports four decisive points in his short lifetime, all of which were induced by the heavy-handed operation of the Communist Party line. At ten Bruck was told that his brother, who was killed in the Warsaw Uprising, had not really died for Poland but was an agent of the London emigré "reactionaries."

At fifteen, the state apparatus deliberately undermined the youth's faith in God by a policy of asserting that God had been on the side of the London emigré Poles. There was no room for Him in the new Polish regime. To replace this gap young Bruck was offered Communist Party activity. This gave him a goal in life and, in his own words, "I believed in the idea and its executors."

Recently came the newest blow. It turned out, by the Communists' admission, that they had been living a lie, that the tyranny of Stalin was not an invention made in London but a fact. All the values that Bruck had been taught to accept under Communist auspices were again turned topsy-turvy. He writes, "I do not know how to change my soul for the fourth time without fear that it will become a rag. I'm ashamed of my older colleagues, ashamed of the whole Party, for all those who waited, sniffed and looked around and for those who deceived. I'm ashamed of all of you, and above all, of myself for my stupidity and credulity."

This somewhat bathetic description of life in a totalitarian state is as revelatory as any of the more extended documents which have been published since the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist Party. It denotes strikingly what has been at the center of Kremlin control in the course of its recent history. The Communists are concerned with manipulating minds and bodies to serve the ends of a totalitarian state. That in the process millions of minds and bodies would be broken was of no concern to the Kremlin. What Bruck's letter seems to indicate is that there has been a rebellion of the mind in the Soviet Union and its satellites. The desire of the Soviet masses for greater freedom is undoubtedly one of the factors which explains the recent retreat from the outer vestiges of Stalinism. It may not be a very long step from this rebellion to one which will eventually seek the end of the Soviet dictatorship itself.

The Middle East

HISTORICALLY, THE MIDDLE EAST always has been an area where the ambitions of the great powers clashed and an incubator of wars. Today, when the development of the area's vast oil resources has been added to its key position on the land, sea, and air routes joining Europe, Asia, and Africa, the interest of the powers in the area has become more intense than ever. Geographical proximity makes it a subject of obvious interest to the Soviet Union; economic factors, no less than considerations of global strategy, make it of no less concern to the United States and Great Britain.

No war in this area could long remain localized. Either the powers would speedily bring it to an end by joint action, or extend it by intervening on opposite sides. The danger of this latter development has been made abundantly clear by the recent sales of arms to Egypt and Syria by the Soviet bloc, but it was not created by that action. Both the Soviet Union and the Western powers have since 1945 intervened in Iran, in Palestine (where arms from the Soviet bloc played a crucial role in Israel's victory over the Arabs in the Palestinian War), and in the internal politics of the various states of the region.

The Baghdad Pact, sponsored but not joined by the United States, was intended to ward off possible Soviet penetration. British bases in Jordan and American bases in Saudi Arabia are designed to offset the Soviet Union's advantage of proximity. To these Western bases and political maneuvers, the Soviet Union has in turn replied by her arms deals with Egypt and other Arab states.

An Embargo on Arms

Nothing is to be gained by a further competitive arming of the various states in the area. Increased armaments will bring security to none; rather, as they become a further burden on the already tottering economies of such states as Israel and Egypt, they will intensify existing tensions and hasten the coming of a war which could precipitate world wide atomic conflict. What is needed is the adoption of immediate measures to ease existing tensions, followed by a gradual demilitarization of the area and steps to settle its outstanding disputes so as not merely to avoid full-scale war but to establish a genuine peace. The recent visit of UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld to Israel and the Arab States has produced a beginning in the right direction, but only a beginning. Further measures are needed, and soon.

The most important single immediate step that the situation requires is the adoption of an airtight embargo on all weapons capable of being used for aggression. This includes all types of military or dual-purpose planes, submarines, tanks, and all artillery except perhaps anti-aircraft guns in limited numbers. In theory, it would also include machine guns, semi-automatic rifles, bazookas, and similar weapons of modern infantry war. However, an embargo on such small arms would be difficult to enforce and would probably serve little practical purpose, since there is reason to believe that the countries of the area are capable of producing them in substantial quantities.

Such an embargo might properly exempt purely defensive guided missiles such as the Nike, a limited number of which in fixed installations would serve to protect such cities as Cairo, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Damascus from bombing raids by the planes already in the hands of the various states of the region. The Russians have indicated their willingness to agree to such an embargo; the United States should take the initiative of proposing it in the Security Council. Its adoption would require the cessation of shipments of heavy arms to Iraq under the Baghdad Pact, and to Saudi Arabia under the US bases agreement, which comes up for renewal shortly; it would also mean that Israel would receive no more jet planes from France and Canada.

This would be a reasonable price to pay for the ending of arms shipments from the Soviet bloc to Egypt and Syria. At present, the precarious balance of armaments is such as to deter the Arab states from a war of revenge, and Israel from a preventive war; neither side has that decisive superiority which would make successful aggression feasible. As arms embargo would help to prevent the development of a situation in which either side, whether from hope of victory or sheer desperation, would attempt such aggression. Nor would a general reduction in the arms level of the Middle East render the area more susceptible to Soviet aggression; the Soviet Union is deterred from attacking its neighbors by the fear of a general war, rather than by armies whose total strength would probably be insufficient to cope with a half dozen Soviet divisions.

Meanwhile, it is essential to reduce existing border tensions as a preliminary to negotiations for a general peace in the area. For this purpose, the U.N. truce observers should be increased in number and guaranteed unlimited access to all border areas, so that they may act effectively to prevent clashes, and not merely attempt, as at present, to assess the blame

after the fact. Their task should be facilitated by the establishment of numerous fixed observation points along the borders, and by the demilitarization of a substantial border area on both sides, as proposed by General Burns. Similarly, specific border irritations, such as that on the northern border of the Sea of Galilee, could easily be removed by the adoption of proposals already made by General Burns and Secretary-General Hammarskjöld; if these are not accepted by the parties, they can and should be imposed by the Security Council, and enforced if necessary (as it would most certainly not be) by economic sanctions.

Implementing Regional Plans

Several months of border peace would produce a more favorable climate in which to seek for more fundamental agreement. It would also greatly increase the chances of Syrian and Lebanese acceptance of the Johnston Plan for coordinated development of the Jordan and Yarmuq rivers, a plan which already has the support of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. This plan should be supplemented by—and coupled with—American assistance to Israel in the development of the Yarkon irrigation project, Lebanon and Syria in the use of the waters of the Litani and other waters entirely within their boundaries, and Egypt in the Sinai irrigation project as well as the Aswan dam. Iraq's oil revenues appear to be sufficient to finance her plans for irrigation and power development based on the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, but if need be, the United States should be ready to supplement them for this purpose, and should in any case supply any requested technical assistance.

A permanent settlement for the area requires that the Arab states recognize that Israel is there to stay, and that normal political and economic relationships with her cannot be indefinitely avoided. On her part, Israel must recognize her obligation to permit the return of all those Arab refugees who wish to come back, as fast as they can be absorbed into the Israeli economy, and she must also accept the necessity of certain territorial concessions. Both Israel and the Arab states must be ready to cooperate in facilitating the compensation and the resettlement of refugees who do not choose to return; the United States should stand ready to provide the financial assistance which both repatriation and resettlement will entail. A possible basis of agreement might include an exchange of a corridor across the southern Negev, affording a land bridge between Egypt and Jordan, for the Gaza strip (together with responsibility for the settled inhabitants and the refugees in that territory) and

Egyptian agreement to unrestricted passage through the Suez Canal for Israeli ships. This would involve Israeli surrender of plans for developing the fishing village of Elath into a major Red Sea port; since there is in any case no possibility that this development would take place for many years to come, and since it could only be achieved by diverting large amounts of labor and capital from far more useful purposes, it would be a small price to pay for the use of the Suez Canal.

Israel might also remove a great deal of ill-will at no cost to herself by agreeing to surrender the ten-metre strip which cuts Syrian farmers and fishermen off from their traditional rights to the use of the Sea of Galilee. (During the Mandate period, these rights were preserved by special agreements.) And finally, she should satisfy the justified Arab insistence on the right of the refugees to return to their homes by agreeing to accept them back in an order of priority to be determined by the refugees through their own organizations, or by negotiation, as fast as they could be reabsorbed into her economy, and to compensate those who chose resettlement elsewhere in preference to waiting their turn.

She might either state the rate at which she felt such absorption would be possible, with international aid, or this might be left to a United Nations representative or technical commission to determine. Such a settlement would satisfy the moral claims of the refugees and the Arab states on their behalf, while protecting Israel from the danger of having her economy swamped by a sudden influx that she was unable to handle. And it would remove the present psychological obstacles to resettlement of those who cannot be or do not wish to be repatriated; under these conditions the chances are that a large majority would choose resettlement. Such an agreement could contribute to the welfare of all the states of the area, as well as decreasing the likelihood of either a local or general war.

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The SOCIALIST CALL

Detroit: The Jobless Reappear

What the Auto Cutback Means

By Frank Marquart

THERE IS A SENSE in which the role of trade unions can be compared to the labors of Sisyphus, that mythological character condemned endlessly to roll a large stone up a steep hill. He labors and strains and sweats and finally reaches the top, only to see the stone roll down again. For Sisyphus the problem is never solved.

Similarly unions must engage in never-ending uphill struggles to win improvements in wages, hours and working conditions, including a check on speed-up, supplemental unemployment pay and such fringe benefits as vacation pay and pensions. But all these things raise labor costs and spur management's drive to automate jobs, modernize plants, decentralize operations and rush out production schedules until the market becomes saturated. Then, like Sisyphus, tens of thousands of workers once again find themselves at the bottom of the heap.

The Situation in the Auto Industry

Consider what is happening in the auto industry today.

The U. S. Labor Department estimates auto industry unemployment at 159,000 as of May 12. But this figure does not take into account reduction of work weeks as well as layoffs. On May 11, for example, General Motors closed all its assembly plants for that day "to balance production with current demand."

Also on that day, as well as on the following Monday, Chrysler closed down its two main auto assembly plants. If the Labor Department took into account the rate at which such reductions in work weeks chop down payrolls, the official unemployment figures would be substantially higher.

Governor Williams estimates unemployment in Michigan at 190,000 including 125,000 jobless in Detroit. And the UAW says that 60,000 workers who had jobs as recently as last December are now on lay-off. The union's figures show about 18,000 laid-off Ford workers on May 1, and according to Ford Local 600 the number of layoffs then runs into the hun-

Frank Marquart, educational director of Local 212 of the United Auto Workers, has contributed frequently to the SOCIALIST CALL on labor developments in Detroit.

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dreds. But Chrysler, weakest of the "Big Three," is hit hardest by the recession. Last December employment in the Dodge plant stood at around 27,000; today only 11,700 are working in the plant. As a result of successive layoffs beginning with December 16 and still continuing, employment in the Chrysler automotive body division dropped from over 30,000 to 18,000.

The Market Glut

Basic cause for these layoffs of course is an oversupplied market. *Automotive News*, a trade journal published in Detroit, shows how much 1956 has dropped behind 1955. Auto production in the first four months of this year was 2,291,537, which is 20.9 per cent behind the 2,896,004 cars produced in the first four months of 1955. General Motors' President Harlow Curtice believes sales of new cars this year will slump 22 per cent from last year's record level. Curtice, who predicted last January that the decline this year would amount to only 12 per cent, said it now appears that the industry will sell only 5,800,000 new cars in 1956 as against the 8,000,000 sold last year. He blames the auto recession on two factors: Tight credit policies of the Federal Reserve Board, and "unfounded rumors of revolutionary changes in 1957 models alleged to be introduced at earlier dates than 1956 models."

The UAW, however, attributes the market glut of 902,000 new unsold cars to the industry's chaotic production scheduling. Early in May the UAW urged the heads of six automobile companies to meet in a joint labor-management conference to tackle the "alarming unemployment situation in the industry." The UAW proposed that the conference review past and present production schedules and their impact upon the levels of employment; discuss the future production schedules and their impact upon employment opportunities; study the introduction of automation into the production process and the impact of such technology upon future employment; review plans of decentralization and location of new plants and facilities as they relate to providing employment opportunities in communities which have experienced serious economic dislocation.

Silence from the Board Rooms

After several weeks passed and the auto industry leaders didn't even bother to reply, Walter Reuther announced: "So far we have received no answer to our proposal. The plight of thousands of workers on layoff cannot be swept under a rug woven of platitudes or silence." Reuther said high pressure selling in 1955 cut into a large share of the normal 1956 market. The extent to which people must pay this year for cars bought last year is indicated by the fact that installment credit outstanding on purchases of automobiles totals more over \$14 billion.

While the auto magnates ignore the UAW's appeal to tackle the problems of instability and mass unemployment, the industry is spending a fortune to advance technical and production know-how. What is happening in the auto industry today bears out the prediction made by some economists that automation will accelerate the rate at which the capacity to produce goods outstrips the ability of the market to absorb those goods. Or, as some labor economists put it: Automation speeds up the process by which productive power exceeds effective demand. At a time when the auto industry is capable of producing more than a million cars than it can sell this year, the Big Three earmarked the following amounts for modernization of plant and equipment: General Motors, over \$1 billion; Ford, over \$500 million; Chrysler, over \$300 million.

The Decentralization Process

Decentralization is one way of modernizing the productive process. The big producers are building new plants in strategic parts of the country, tailoring them to fit automated equipment. The result is that Ford's huge Rouge plant, which once employed over 60,000, now has a work force of around 40,000. Chrysler is also farming work out to plants located in Delaware, Ohio, Indiana and other states, with the result that some of the corporation's Detroit plants may, within a few years, have their work force cut down by as much as two-thirds.

Thus, in the Dodge plant, 3000 jobs were taken out of the transmission department and moved to an Indianapolis plant; 500 foundry jobs were also shifted to Indiana, and recently the car wiring work was farmed out to—of all places!—a General Motors plant. Sometime next year about one-half of the automobile bodies now made in Chrysler's Detroit automotive body plants will be manufactured in the corporation's Delaware plant.

Ghost factories are dotting some areas of Detroit

now. Hudson Motor Company all but folded up and its employment dwindled from 26,000 to 1300. Murray Body Company went out of business completely and workers, some of whom had over 20 and 25 years seniority, saw pension rights and other fringe benefits gone with the wind. Latest parts plant about to topple over the brink is Motors Products company, whose union and management representatives are joining hands in a desperate effort to save jobs of 6000 workers. In 1955 Studebaker-Packard Corp. suffered a net loss of over \$29 million and in the first quarter of this year a further loss of \$14 million, indicating clearly enough how the small independent firms are faring in competition with the giants. In a press release the UAW declared: "Liquidation of the Packard division would be a disastrous blow not only to the thousands of Packard workers but also to those who work in the many factories which supply Packard with parts, to the city's merchants and small businessmen and to the community as a whole."

Rescuing Plants for Production

Michigan CIO News informs its readers that Detroit area Studebaker-Packard workers voted unanimously at a special meeting to request the federal government to place defense orders with the SP corporation. Anyone who doubts that American unions have a stake in our permanent war economy would do well to make a case study of the UAW in relation to current mass layoffs. There was a time when the UAW advocated converting idle plant facilities to the production of pre-fab houses, but this issue is never raised anymore. Significantly, the very first proposal in the Union's 1956 legislative program calls for more increases in defense spending. Even if additional defense work is awarded to alleviate critical unemployment in Detroit, it would take six to nine months to tool up. Meanwhile thousands of workers are facing the bleak prospect of exhausted unemployment compensation and no jobs in sight.

Unfortunately, the supplementary unemployment benefits (SUB) provision in UAW contracts, even after it goes into effect, offers little or no protection to workers with low seniority, and no protection at all for those who were laid off before May 2. No worker with less than a year's seniority will be able to collect SUB funds. The number of weeks for which a worker can draw benefits under the plan will depend on his seniority and on the level of the company trust fund. SUB trust funds are built up by contributions of auto companies at the rate of five cents for each hour worked by employees. In the early period during which the trust fund is built up, the

number of weeks for which payments can be made to workers will be limited.

The Operation of the SUB

"Sources close to the auto union's leadership said Saturday that Walter P. Reuther privately is very disillusioned over the application of SUB in June as 'a Sop to the layoff situation,'" wrote Asher Lauren in the *Detroit News*, May 13. When added to state unemployment compensation benefits SUB payments will bring the worker's weekly benefits up to 65 per cent of take home pay for four weeks and thereafter up to 60 per cent.

When the trust fund reaches maximum levels workers will be able to collect up to 26 weeks layoff benefits. But at this stage of the game the trust fund will permit a man with, say, only four years' seniority, to draw benefits for no more than 3½ weeks. Because the SUB language in contracts is highly complicated, most workers are not yet aware of what small benefits await them. Many workers laid off prior to May 1 think that the companies timed the layoff to escape paying out SUB benefits.

One hears considerable grumbling on the part of workers laid off as far back as January; they are exhausting their state compensation benefits at a time when workers laid off after May 1 will receive state benefits plus SUB payments. Michigan state benefit exhaustions during April totalled over 5000 for the second month in a row. Since the beginning of the year some 17,000 workers have finished collecting their unemployment compensation benefits and are still jobless.

When Real Trouble Begins

Once unemployment compensation benefits stop, workers are in real trouble. A year ago auto factories were running full blast and thousands of production workers were on overtime schedules, gearing their living standards to premium pay checks, buying a car, television set, and other goods on the installment plan. Young married people were forced by exorbitant rents to buy homes on down payments and heavy mortgage. When working full time the typical auto worker lives from pay day to pay day—in fact, sometimes he has to borrow money a few days before he gets his pay check. Older workers—those with more than ten years' seniority who worked steadily and saved money during the War—are likely to have their homes paid for by now and even have some money saved. But it is the low seniority workers who get laid off and who immediately feel the pinch when

they have to adjust to unemployment compensation income.

The *Detroit Free Press*, May 21, reported that lengthening lines of debt-ridden persons appearing in landlord-tenant and land contract cases are causing concern among Wayne County Circuit Court Commissioners. Said the Commissioners: "There's no question about it, automobile industry layoffs, coupled with easy credit, are creating great hardships in this county. I've never seen anything like the crowds we've been handling in our courts recently."

The commissioner tells about a man who had bought a car with a low down payment, a television set and three other appliances with no down payments. "Credit companies had taken away everything. The man told me that all he had left was seven mouths to feed." Every day unemployed workers unable to pay rent, or pay their other bills as they come due, ask union local officials to intercede for them when creditors issue ultimatums. In many instances union officers prevail upon landlords to accept partial payments on back rent or persuade store owners to ease up on their pressure until the worker gets back on the job. "What we need in this town is a kind of WPA which will provide jobs shovelling dirt or raking leaves or doing anything just so workers can get enough to keep the wolf, the landlord and the finance company away," said a local union president.

Safeguarding Profits

If the business slump is tough on unemployed workers, it is also making life a grind for those still fortunate enough to work in the plants. Drastic production cutbacks result in idle equipment and heavy overhead costs which eat into profits. For example, Chrysler states that wear and tear on machinery, equipment and tools cost \$165 million in 1955. On the basis of the company's car production for that year, depreciation of facilities and the amortization of tool and dies cost around \$104 per unit of output. But had Chrysler produced only as many cars in 1955 as in 1954, depreciation and amortization would have amounted to \$187 per unit, and profits per unit would have declined accordingly.

Management tries to offset that profit decline by squeezing more production out of its workers. Sometimes open or veiled threats to farm out jobs are enough to make workers turn out more production per manhour. Plant committeemen and chief stewards say that when sales were high and plants were working on overtime schedules last year, supervisors made no attempt to turn on the heat. Now that production

is cutback and many machines and assembly lines stand idle much of the time, workers are badgered and bullied to increase output.

To cite but one instance: So serious did the speed-up issue become in the Dodge plant that the Local union's executive board ordered a strike vote recently. In a statement to the Dodge local membership, the executive board said: "Dodge workers are tired of being taken for a herd of cattle and driven to greater

and greater effort to maintain the swollen profits of 1955 on a falling market of 1956. Time study men are let loose on Dodge workers like a pack of dogs on a fox. Only we don't have the sporting chance of running away and hiding in a hole till it's all over..."

Like the task of Sisyphus, labor's struggle to achieve tolerable working conditions, job security and decent living standards is incessant under capitalism.

The Communist Record Repudiated

By

Norman Thomas

THIS DISCUSSION is necessarily less than a balanced statement of my conception, or the Socialist International's, of the road to peace and freedom. My emphasis is on the reasons for my rejection of partnership with the communist party in walking that road. Briefly, let me preface my objections to communism by reminding you of my long-standing advocacy of universal, controlled disarmament as our best hope of peace. Recent events have increased my faith that for the sake of our mutual escape from the annihilation implicit in tomorrow's war, the American and Russian governments, before it is too late, may agree to an effective transfer of conflict out of the realm of war by the institution of world-wide disarmament, under a duly authorized authority. The achievement of peace requires such disarmament and the end of that waste of natural resources and human skills which should be employed in the cooperative conquest of poverty.

In the field of civil liberties, may I remind you that I have opposed racial discrimination in any part of our American life by every means in my power. I rejoice that the American Communist Party is now allowed to drop that slogan, "Negro self-determination in the Black Belt," which as I early pointed out was, in the American scene, an invitation to conditions worse than our present degree of segregation. For saying what Mr. Dennis now has said that Communists should believe and say, I was stigmatized in *The Daily Worker* as an advocate of lynching.

My opposition to the Smith Act is well known. I opposed the passage of the law; I opposed its application against the Trotskyist-Communists in Minneapolis, against the curious assortment of alleged pro-

Nazis during World War II; I have opposed its use against the Stalinist-Communists in more recent years. The Communist Party applauded the first two federal prosecutions, but not the third set from which not only it but the best interests of our democracy have suffered.

Communism, as I shall discuss it, bears little resemblance to the program of sweetness and light presented by Mr. Dennis' report to the National Committee of the Party. If we were to judge simply on this report, such criticisms as democratic socialists might offer would not prevent consideration of united action—or better, united actions—in pursuit of peace and freedom. But one such report cannot decisively change the philosophy and practice of the international Communist movement as it has revealed itself in the tragic years since World War I. Indeed it is highly significant that no such report was ever issued by the American Communist high command until after Moscow had given the signal for stripping Stalin of claim to absolute reverence and obedience which was the distinguishing brand of the true Communist everywhere. (Witness the fate of Trotskyists, Lovestonites, and Earl Browder in America.)

The Denigration of Stalin

The remarkable denigration of Stalin by the "collective leadership" which has succeeded him is encouraging for the future of Russia and the hope of peace. What Khrushchev reportedly has said would have shocked Wendell Willkie who, then titular leader of the Republican Party, made in my hearing the most pro-Stalinist speech I ever heard from a non-Communist, not excepting certain Christian apologists who seemed to find it easier—at a distance—to apply the doctrine of love of one's enemy to the men in the Kremlin than to the men in Washington.

But however hopeful for the future may be the

end of Stalin worship, if men were logical it would have shattered the very foundations of communism. For communism has been a rigid secular religion of secular salvation through implicit obedience to the Party's commands. The ultimate goal might be a general achievement of earthly bliss, but now not only individuals and their rights, but justice and truth as commonly understood are expendable. The good of the cause is the supreme law and as Lenin—not Stalin—wrote: "We must be able... to agree to any sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain within them and carry on communist work at all costs."

From the Manual on Organization

The American Communist Party Manual on Organization, issued in 1935, at a time when, as now, the Party preached the united front, declared: "The Soviet Union is the only fatherland of workers all over the world... the most important factor for the liberation of workers in every country." (p. 16) Stalin entirely dominated the Communist International and the Manual told American Communists that "the basic principles and decisions such, as for example, the Program of the Communist International, cannot be questioned in the Party." (p. 26)

Under the psychological pressures of this discipline, if not also under physical torture, in the totalitarian states, Communists, their own hands stained with blood, confessed to traitorous acts against the Party and its leaders of which suddenly they are absolved by the new leaders, all of whom had been active at very high levels in committing the crimes they now denounce. (Consider, for instance, what it means that Rajk in Hungary should be rehabilitated by Rakosi.)

None of the leaders now repents; none of them asks forgiveness of God or man. They merely make Stalin the scapegoat, and in so doing acknowledge the awful wickedness of the basic philosophy which made them his docile tools. They now relax certain controls; they seem to be abandoning the worst forms of their revival of chattel slavery in the terrible work camps to which hundreds of thousands of men and women had been sent without any proper trial or hearing.

They are now "rehabilitating" some of the hundreds of thousands whom they helped to liquidate. But they extend this belated apology to none of their socialist antagonists—not, for instance, to those Polish Jewish heroes, Ehrlich and Alter, killed by Com-

munist during the war against Hitler in which those great leaders, despite their outrageous imprisonment by Stalin when he was Hitler's ally, were preaching the united front to their comrades.

The 'Collective Leadership' Line

The collective leadership in "the Soviet fatherland of the workers all over the world" has, for its own reasons, relaxed but not abolished controls. But the Soviet Union is still a one-party, totalitarian state, controlled from the top down. Its economy is virtually that of a state capitalism, in which all the powers of former owning classes are taken over by the dictatorship, a dictatorship which gives the workers neither anything like economic equality nor freedom. They as citizens and unionists have far less power over their own lives than do American workers. At great cost the Russian economy is producing an increasing abundance of goods. But not freedom.

Bulgarian and Khrushchev win Asian applause as enemies of the remnants of the old colonialism imposed by Western imperial powers. But they have made no single move to grant justice to the autonomous peoples whom Stalin totally uprooted from their homes. Even the name of the Kalmuck people is absent from the latest editions of the Soviet Encyclopedia.

A Variation of Stalinist Genocide

I know something of these people. A few of them are now settled over in Jersey having got here out of displaced persons camps. They have done well enough so that a little over one year ago a small committee, aided by American friends, decided to go to the Great Buddhist World Congress in Rangoon, Burma, partly because Kalmucks are Buddhists, and partly to inquire if any of the Asians know where in vast Siberia—or possibly Outer Mongolia—Stalin had exiled the remnants of their countrymen. They got American passports as stateless persons, but had enormous difficulties in getting Asian visas.

They came to me and to others for help. Chiefly through the reasonableness of the government of Ceylon, we got them started. Finally they reached Burma but nowhere found the news they sought. My point is not only that Stalin had practiced on these Kalmucks and others genocide, the worst type of imperial oppression, not only that Bulgarian and Khrushchev have done nothing to repair the horrible injustice of their once infallible leader, but that today Asian nations, not under Communist governments,

are so fearful of the Russian Big Brothers that they put insuperable difficulties in the way of receiving into their countries, two or three inquiring tourists seeking only information about their kin. Is this situation illustrative of the kind of peace and freedom the Communists now invite democratic socialists to join them in seeking?

Let me make it plain. As an American and a Socialist, I believe that in and out of the UN we must of necessity negotiate with Communist governments on those approaches to disarmament and peace upon which the very life of mankind depends. I rejoice in the belief that as masters of Russia, Bulganin and Khrushchev, whatever their motives, have instituted changes in the policy which already have reduced the danger of World War III. The very nature of modern war may compel them to conclude that no longer can it be for them as it was for Lenin and Stalin the midwife of their type of revolution, but only of universal death. Nevertheless, I am not yet convinced that they and the international communist movement which they lead have changed the views expressed not only by Stalin but by Lenin. These views can be summarized in this quotation from the declaration of the Sixth World Congress:

"The Soviet Union harbors no illusions as to the possibility of durable peace. Wars between proletarian and bourgeois states will necessarily arise. Leninism combats all pacifist theories concerning the abolition of war. Wars of proletarian dictatorship against world capitalism are inevitable and revolutionary."

Somewhat earlier, Stalin (in 1925) told the plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party that war was "inevitable" but that his government would cover preparations for entering it with "the banner of peace." I quote his conclusion:

"All this does not mean that we must necessarily undertake an active aggressive attack against any one... If such a suggestion (notka) has slipped out in anyone's remarks, that is not correct. OUR BANNER WILL REMAIN AS BEFORE—THE BANNER OF PEACE. (Emphasis in the original.) But if a war begins, then it does not behoove us to sit with folded hands—it behooves us to enter, but to enter last. And we will enter for this purpose—to throw the decisive weight into the scales on the winning side, the weight which can tip the scales."

It will take far more than Bulganin and Khrushchev have yet said or done, far more than Mr. Dennis' latest pronunciamiento, to make me join a united front with communists for this sort of approach to peace. Of course I hope that that "move" now may be forthcoming. But it would be madness to rush

again into such a united front as was ended abruptly by Stalin's sudden pact with the arch-fiend Adolf Hitler.

How Communists Act

To turn from world-shaking events to our own history, let me summarize our Socialist experiences with Communist united fronts. If I speak personally it is not because I feel myself peculiarly aggrieved or peculiarly important but because my experiences illustrate Communist procedures.

William Z. Foster, still titular leader of the Party, before Stalin instituted the "united front against fascism" wrote *Toward a Soviet America*. He would then have no truck with parliamentarianism or socialists. He declared: "Even before the seizure of power, the workers will organize the Red Guard... The leader of the revolution in all its stages is the Communist Party." In 1935 when the *Manual* already quoted appeared, Communists were advocating the united front. But the *Manual* for Party members warns that communists must help the workers see the "treachery" of AFL leaders and the "cynically conciliatory policy of the Right Wing of the Socialist Party toward the bourgeoisie and the AFL bureaucrats," and the "role of the Trotskyists as the advance guard of the counter-revolution." (p. 11)

Early in 1934, Communists here in New York broke up with violence a Socialist meeting in behalf of the worker victims of Dollfuss' fascism in Vienna. Later that year they scurrilously cartooned and lampooned Eleanor Roosevelt and myself because we were photographed shaking hands at a meeting on housing at which we both spoke. A few months later, Earl Browder, returning from Moscow, announced the new policy, and by 1936 he was running for President in a campaign avowedly intended to help Mr. Roosevelt win. In that united front period, I was chairman of a joint committee for the defense of Terzani, an Italian anti-fascist refugee, falsely charged by Art Smith, leader of the Khaki Shirts of America, with murder in a brawl at a meeting.

The Committee, which wanted a martyr rather than vindication of the innocent, broke an agreement and at a mass meeting urged picketing the Queens County Court House which might easily have lost the case. We finally won. We stopped such picketing. But the Communists broke up the committee rather than let it press for the indictment of Art Smith with appeals to the Governor and the Bar Association for help. These appeals Carlo Tresca and I successfully made as individuals.

The Stalin-Hitler Pact

Everybody knows that the united front policy of the Party was ended by the American-Stalin pact which the American Party docilely accepted. When, however, Hitler attacked Stalin and the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor the Communists became ultra-patriots. They made the Party into an association. In 1944 when, as Socialist presidential candidate, I was, like practically all Americans, supporting the war, but sharply criticizing the approach to peace by unconditional surrender, appeasement of Stalin, and the inadequate Cairo declaration, communist publications suggested that the government ban our meetings and, in Seattle, that the workers break mine up. But after the war Earl Browder, who had directed this patriotic united front, was cast aside by Moscow and driven from the American Party with indecent contumely and abuse by the comrades who had agreed with him. For how much of all this do Mr. Dennis and his comrades stand readily honestly to repent now that once more they seek the united front? Have they indeed power to commit this American Party except insofar as the high command in the Soviet Union, "the Fatherland of all the workers of the world" may approve?

It must not be forgotten that Mr. Dennis and the *Daily Worker's* new look at Stalin and the meaning of peace and democracy did not originate in our own country. Only when Russia's collective leadership encouraged them to look could they begin to see what had long been painfully obvious to all lovers of peace and freedom. Can you wonder, then, at our Socialist rejection at this time, and on this evidence, of any renewal of united front activities?

Some Questions to the CP

I must leave history, and looking to the future, make a proposal to Mr. Dennis. Conceivably I might alter or begin to alter my opposition to united front activities in the light of your Communist answer, not only in words but in deeds, to the following questions:

1.—How far does the Party go in repudiating the positions to some of which I have drawn attention in Foster's *Toward a Soviet America* and J. Peters' *Manual*?

2.—How completely does the Party repudiate or modify the statement I quoted from the Sixth Congress on the illusion of peace or Lenin's statement, before he came to power, that every "peace program" is a deception. (Central Committee Proposals submitted to Socialist Conference, April 1916.)

3.—Will the Party urge on established Communist governments the end of totalitarianism and the one party state?

4.—Will the Party urge on the Kremlin rehabilitation of the Kalmucks, Baltic peoples, and other victims of ruthless Communist Party imperialism.

5.—Will the Party urge on all Communist governments the release of those whom we call political prisoners and their rehabilitation?

6.—Will the Party urge on the Polish government and its Moscow masters the award of posthumous honor to Stalin's victims, Ehrlich and Alter, and permission of Polish Jews to re-establish the heroic Jewish Socialist Bund, along with other open and above-board political parties?

7.—Will the Party urge on Moscow acceptance of those forms of inspection and control which are essential to obtaining and enforcing universal and controlling disarmament?

The correct answers to these questions in word and deed is worth a thousand speeches illustrative of the latest turn in party line by grace of Moscow.

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The Socialism of Asia

When Democracy Looks Ahead

By U Ba Swe

THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD feel today that a new world war is more unlikely than it has ever been since 1945.

War as a continuation of politics by other means can, in the atomic and nuclear age, no more be considered as an instrument of national policy. Although the danger of global war has receded, a genuine and creative peace has as yet to be won. The uneasy peace which at present exists is still overshadowed by the clouds of conflicts and antagonisms.

This is particularly true of the countries in West Asia, where acute tensions and conflicts exist. We feel that all the resources of world's statesmanship should be mobilized to bring peace and stability to this area. The Asian Socialist Conference will do everything to promote this peace and would greet those comrades in particular.

While approving and appreciating every step towards the relaxation of tensions and greater international cooperation, we yet cannot hide our apprehensions as to the still ever-present dangers which could menace the very peace of the world.

These dangers must be eliminated. For us, peace is as contrary to war as construction is to destruction.

The Opposition to War

The vast masses of workers and peasants of Asia are as resolutely opposed to war, to the possibility of another Hiroshima, as they are filled with longing for a world which is committed to the ways of peace, of fruitful labor and of national and international construction.

In the immediate post-war period the hopes which millions of people had for world peace and economic advance were shattered by the fears engendered by the aggressive expansions of military blocs.

The peoples of the world therefore breathed a sigh of relief when the big powers met at Geneva last year to discuss ways and means of putting an end to the cold war and of introducing a system of disarmament. The visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin to Yugoslavia and India, Burma and Afghanistan and the decisions of the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist Par-

ty to condemn Stalinism and to abolish the Stalin cult, must also be welcomed as contributions towards the relaxation of international tensions.

The Underdeveloped Countries

The relaxation of tensions between the great powers and the lessening of the dangers of war between them have however not solved ALL international problems. It has as yet made no great impact on one of the most serious and the most fateful problem which faces our world today.

This is the problem of the underdeveloped countries, which finds its explosive expression in the fact that the world, cutting across all questions of ideology and of political systems, is today divided between a minority of rich and industrially advanced countries and a majority of poor an economically backward countries, living in poverty, illiteracy and disease. The vast majority of the human race lives in these countries and it is on this problem that world attention should now be focused.

Although one must welcome the offers of increased trade and aid which have now been made by the world's two giants—Russia and America—we yet feel that the countries in need of this aid would benefit more if it could be channeled through the United Nations.

The Advantage of UN

Economic and technical aid given through the UN would remove all hints of political advantages or pressure, which usually accompanies the aid provided by any big power and such aid through the UN would more easily fit into the framework of the receiving countries, industrial and economic needs, and would remove aid from the sphere of power-politics and of competition, even of the most beneficial type.

Aid of this kind could become a symbol of disinterested international cooperation and the inspiring expression of an international community dedicated to the noble task of fighting poverty, disease and human frustration wherever it exists.

In the light of these compelling requirements and objectives we call upon world public opinion and

upon our Socialist comrades throughout the world to conduct a vigorous campaign for the early implementation of the program of economic aid, embodied in SUNFED (Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development).

We particularly welcome this program because it is based upon the progressive idea of placing at the disposal of constructive economic development resources which formerly were wasted for the maintenance of huge armies and even bigger stockpiles of ammunition.

The implementation of this program and its wholehearted support by all members of the UN, the big powers in particular, would become a concrete and tangible sign and proof that the world is moving towards disarmament and away from preparations for war and towards economic construction, rising living standards and freedom from fear and want.

Time for Stock-Taking

It is time for stock-taking for Socialists in Asia in particular and the Socialists all over the world in general. We think it is possible to say without exaggeration that the forces of Socialism are gaining strength all over Asia. Although there may be temporary setbacks in one country or another, ups and downs in the general movement, the direction is one of unmistakable progress. For it is clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that only the program and the methods of Socialism as adopted by us are in any way adequate to confront the immensity of the tasks which challenge all the countries of Asia.

Life has proved conclusively that only Socialism, which is linked organically to democracy and to basic human rights and freedom, can assure a Socialist society which is both in control of its economic destiny, and which respects and enhances the human personality, its dignity and self-respect.

Although we cannot claim and do not claim every success for Socialism in this region as a success for the parties assembled in the Asian Socialist Conference, we feel that the objective of a Socialist society accepted by many parties and governments in Asia, is only an additional indication of the vigor, strength and historic appeal of the ideas of Socialism. In any case, we feel that all genuine and effective efforts towards economic development and growth of the human and productive forces, towards social justice for the toiling millions and towards greater equality between social classes in the framework of democratic institutions, can only increase the strength and stability of every country and represent significant ad-

vances on the road to Socialism. Today Socialism is being implemented in diverse ways and finds its vindication in every step to real economic progress, genuine social reform, and in the ever-increasing participation of the submerged masses in the making of their own history.

The Role of Asia

A review of the international situation would be incomplete without stressing the important role which the independent nations of Asia have continued to play in world affairs. The relaxation of international tensions, which we have described, the greater interest shown by the great powers in giving economic aid to Asia, the increasing respect which the nations of Asia are gaining in the world community by virtue of their mature and responsible approach to world problems, all these are the fruits of the independent policy of non-alignment and non-involvement, which these nations have pursued.

In the future we must continue to march along this road and press forward with our unique contributions so that the world as a whole may advance toward a world Socialist society free from the evils of national oppressions and from the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance.

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U Ba Swe is the secretary of the Asian Socialist Conference.

The 'New Negro' of the South

Behind the Montgomery Story

By Martin Luther King

THERE ARE THREE BASIC attitudes that one can take toward the question of progress in the area of race relations. The first is the attitude of extreme optimism. The optimist would contend that we have come a long way in race relations. He would point proudly to the marvelous strides that have been made in the area of civil rights over the last few decades. From this he would conclude that the problem is just about solved, and that we can sit comfortably by the wayside and wait for the coming of the inevitable.

The second attitude that one can take toward the question of progress in the area of race relations is that of extreme pessimism. The pessimist would argue that we have made only minor strides in the area of race relations. He would contend that the present tension which we witness in certain sections of the nation is fit testimony to the fact that we have created more problems than we have solved.

The Taint of Sin

He would turn to the realm of orthodox theology and seek to show that hovering over every man is the tragic taint of original sin, and that at bottom nature cannot be changed. He would turn to the realm of psychology and seek to show the determinative effects of habit structures, and the gripping effect of certain attitudes that are instilled in the child at an early age. Once these attitudes and habits are adapted, he contends, they are permanent and inflexible. So the pessimist would conclude that we can do nothing toward progress in race relations. The extreme pessimist and the extreme optimist have at least one thing in common: they both agree that we must sit down and do nothing in the area of race relations. The optimist says do nothing because integration is inevitable. The pessimist says do nothing because integration is impossible.

Dr. Martin Luther King is the Montgomery, Ala. minister whose leadership of the Montgomery Improvement Association in directing a boycott against Jim Crow buses has established him as an outstanding spokesman of the new Negro. This article is based on a talk given by Dr. King before the NAACP on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in the schools.

The third attitude that one can take toward the question of progress in race relations is the realistic attitude. Like the synthesis of Hegelian philosophy, the realistic attitude seeks to reconcile the truths of two opposites and avoid the extremes of both. So the realist in race relations would agree with the optimist in saying, we have come a long way, but he would balance that by agreeing with the pessimist that we have a long long way to go. It is this realistic position that I would like to set forth: We have come a long long way, and we have a long long way to go.

Let us notice first that we have come a long long way. It was in the year of 1619 that the Negro slaves first landed on the shores of this nation. They were brought here from the soils of Africa, and unlike the Pilgrim fathers who landed at Plymouth a year later, they were brought against their wills. For more than two hundred years Africa was raped and plundered, her native kingdoms disorganized, her people and rulers demoralized, and the whole continent inflicted with pains and burdens unparalleled by any other race in the history of the civilized world.

The Dred Scott Decision

Throughout slavery the Negro was considered a thing to be used, not a person to be respected. He was merely a depersonalized cog in the vast plantation machine. The famous Dred Scott decision of 1857 clearly expressed the status of the Negro during slavery. In this decision the United States Supreme Court affirmed, in substance, that the Negro is not a citizen of the United States; he is merely property subject to the dictates of his owner.

With the growth of slavery it became necessary to give some defense for it. It seems to be a fact of life that human nature cannot continue to do wrong without eventually reaching out for some rationalization which will help to clothe an obvious wrong in the beautiful garments of righteousness. This is exactly what the slave owners did. They fell victim to the danger that forever confronts religion and a too literalistic interpretation of the Bible. There is always the danger that religion and the Bible not properly interpreted can be used as forces to crystallize the

status-quo. This is exactly what happened. It was argued from pulpits that Negroes were inferior by nature. There were even pseudo-scientists who sought to prove that in brain size and lung capacity Negroes were inferior to whites.

In time many Negroes lost faith in themselves and came to believe that perhaps they were inferior. The tragedy of physical slavery was that it gradually led to the paralysis of mental slavery; the Negro's mind and soul became enslaved. So long as the Negro was willing to accept this "place" assigned to him, racial peace was maintained. But it was an uneasy peace in which the Negro was forced patiently to accept injustice, insult and exploitation. Truly it was an obnoxious negative peace, for true peace is not merely the absence of some negative force—confusion, tension, war—but the presence of some positive force—justice, good will, brotherhood. For years the Negro accepted this negative peace.

The Negro Masses Reevaluated

Then something happened to the Negro. The Negro masses began to re-evaluate themselves. They came to feel that they were somebody. Their religion revealed to them that God loves all of his children, and that the important thing about a man "is not his specificity but his fundamentum," not the texture of his hair or the color of his skin, but the texture and quality of his soul. So he can now cry out with the eloquent poet:

*Fleecy locks and black complexion
cannot forfeit nature's claim
Skin may differ, but affection
Dwells in black and white the same.
And were I so tall as to reach the pole
Or to grasp the ocean at a span,
I must be measured by my soul
The mind is the standard of the man.*

With this new self-respect and new sense of dignity on the part of the Negro, the South's negative peace was rapidly undermined. The tension which we are witnessing in race relations in the South today is to be explained in part by the revolutionary change in the Negro's evaluation of himself and his determination to struggle and sacrifice until the walls of injustice crumble.

The Meaning of Montgomery

This is at bottom the meaning of what is happening in Montgomery. You cannot understand the bus

protest in Montgomery without understanding that there is a new Negro in the South, with a new sense of dignity, and destiny. For years the Negroes of Montgomery have suffered abuses, indignities and injustices on the buses. The story of these numerous injustices are too well known to mention. But there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. There comes a time when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of exploitation where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. There comes a time when people get tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July and left standing in the piercing chill of an Alpine November.

The story of Montgomery is the story of 50,000 Negroes who are tired of injustices and oppression, and who are willing to substitute tired feet for tired souls, and walk and walk until the walls of injustice are crushed by the battering rams of historical necessity. This is the new Negro. We have come a long way since 1619.

Not only has the Negro come a long way in the recognition of his own intrinsic worth, but he has come a long long way in achieving civil rights. For many years we were forced to live with segregation. In 1896, through the famous Plessy v. Ferguson case, the Supreme Court of this nation established the doctrine of separate-but-equal as the law of the land. Segregation had both legal and moral sanction. But then came May 17, 1954. It was on this date that the Supreme Court gave a death blow to the old Plessy doctrine, insisting that separate facilities are inherently unequal and that to segregate a child because of his race is to deny him the equal protection of the law. If I may speak figuratively, we now see in our generation Old Man Segregation on his death bed. There will be some who will mourn his death, but most of us will be proud to see him pass on. He has been a problem and burden to the whole community. Yes, we have come a long long way since 1896.

The Long Road to Travel

But we cannot stop here. To stop here would mean to become victims of an optimism which would blind our eyes to the true realities of the situation. To stop here would mean to become victims of an illusion wrapped in superficiality. We must go on to affirm that we have a long long way to go.

Let's not fool ourselves. We are far from the promised land, both North and South. In the South we still confront segregation in its glaring and conspiring forms. In the North we confront it in its hid-

den and subtle forms. Segregation is still a fact. It is true that segregation is on its death bed. But history has proven that social systems have a great last-minute breathing power. And the guardians of the status-quo are always on hand with their oxygen tents to preserve the dying order. But if democracy is to live, segregation must die. The underlying philosophy of democracy is diametrically opposed to the underlying philosophy of segregation, and all the dialectics of the logicians cannot make them lie down together. Segregation is a cancer in the body politic which must be removed before our democratic health can be realized.

Toward Eliminating Segregation

So we must work with grim and bold determination to eliminate segregation from every area of American life. We must continue to struggle through legislation. There are those who contend that integration can come only through education, if for no other reason than that morals cannot be legislated. I choose, however, to be dialectical at this point. It isn't either legislation or education; it's both legislation and education. I quite agree that it is impossible to change a man's internal feeling merely through law. This was never the intention of the law.

The law does not seek to change one's internal feelings, it seeks to control the external effects of those internal feelings. For instance, the law cannot make a man love me—religion and education must do that... but it can keep him from lynching me. The law cannot make an employer have compassion for me, but it can keep him from refusing to hire me because of the color of my skin. Religion and education must change one's internal feelings, but it is scarcely a moral act to encourage others to patiently accept injustice until a man's heart gets right. All that we seek through legislation is to control the external effects of one's internal feelings.

Along with this emphasis on legislation, we must have the moral courage to stand up and protest against injustice wherever we find it. Wherever we find segregation we must have the fortitude to passively resist it.

We must not think in terms of retaliatory violence. To attempt to use the method of violence in our struggle would be both impractical and immoral. Violence creates many more problems than it solves. There is a voice crying through the vista of time saying: "He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword." History is replete with the bleached bones of nations who failed to follow this truth. So we must not seek to fight our battles for freedom with

weapons or arms. The method must be that of non-violent resistance, using love as the regulating ideal. The Negro in his struggle for justice must never succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter.

The Technique of Resistance

We have tried this method in Montgomery, and it has worked amazingly well. It has given the Negro in Montgomery a new sense of dignity, and a new determination to tell the truth. Through this persistent protest the Negro is saying to his oppressors, "I don't like the way I am being treated." The truth of the matter is he never did like it, but he was afraid to say it. Now through passive resistance he says it in vociferous terms.

This method is not at all new. A little brown man in India tried it. For years his people had been trampled over by the iron feet of British rule. He watched the British Empire. He noticed her vast and intricate military machinery. He noticed the boundless outreach of her empire. Yet in the midst of this he decided to use another method. He decided to confront physical force with soul force. Through this method of passive resistance Mahatma Gandhi was able to free his people from the political domination, the economic exploitation and the humiliation inflicted upon them by Britain.

We've come a long long way, but we have a long long way to go. I am mindful that there are those who are urging us to adopt a policy of moderation, still others are preaching the "slow up" gospel. They are telling us we are going too fast, which causes us to wonder, how fast is too fast? But in the midst of all of this both Negro and white persons of goodwill realize that we can't afford to slow up. We have a moral obligation to press on.

Our self respect is at stake; but even more, the prestige of our nation is at stake. The rhythmic beat of the deep rumblings of discontent from Africa and Asia are at bottom expressions of their determination not to follow any power that denies basic human rights to a segment of its citizens. So in order to save the prestige of our nation and prevent the uncommitted peoples of the world from falling into the hands of a communistic ideology we must press on. We have a long long way to go.

The Cause of the 'Maladjusted'

There are certain technical words in the vocabulary of every academic discipline which tend to become stereotypes and clichés. Psychologists have a word which is probably used more frequently than

any other word in modern psychology. It is the word "maladjusted." This word is the ringing cry of the new child psychology. Well, there are some things in our social system to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I suggest that we ought to be maladjusted.

I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of lynch-mobs. I never intend to become adjusted to the evils of segregation and discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to the tragic inequalities of an economic system which takes necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating method of physical violence.

History still has a choice place for those who have the moral courage to be maladjusted. The salvation of the world lies in the hands of the maladjusted. The challenge to you is to be maladjusted... as mal-

adjusted as the prophet Amos, who, in the midst of the injustices of his day, could cry out in words that echo across the centuries, "Let judgment run down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream"; as maladjusted as Lincoln, who, about a century ago, had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half free and half slave. As maladjusted as Jefferson, who, in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery, was maladjusted enough to cry out in words lifted to cosmic proportions, "All men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The world is in desperate need of such maladjusted persons. It is only through such maladjustment that we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of "man's inhumanity to man" to the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Socialist Party of America

By Maurice J. Goldbloom

FEW MEN ARE PERMITTED to read their obituaries while they are still living. This rare, if somewhat dubious, privilege has however been vouchsafed to American Socialists rather frequently in the last few years. Professor Shannon's book* is certainly one of the friendlier of these obituaries; if a funeral were in order, it would do rather well as a funeral oration.

As a history, it is the best work which has yet appeared on the period with which it deals. Certainly no other recent study has given so accurate a picture of the nature of the Socialist movement in the days before the first world war. Professor Shannon rightly points out that it was a coalition on the typical American model. It is unfortunate that he has not given a fuller account of that period, as he had originally intended; the very bad book by Ira Kipnis, whose appearance caused him to recast his plans, is certainly no substitute.

Nevertheless, it is possible to overemphasize the heterogeneity of the American Socialist Party and the importance of the differences between its various elements during this era. It is doubtful if they were significantly greater than those between Fabians and

revolutionary syndicalists, Christian Socialists and Marxists, in the British Labor Party of the same period. And I think, also, that it is important to realize that even the more conservative sections of the party—as well as wide circles outside the party—had a sense of imminent revolution, even if they differed as to its nature and its precise aims.

Europe and America

This was to some extent related to the rapid growth of the Socialist movement in all the advanced countries; European Socialists at that period had something of the same feeling, although usually in a somewhat attenuated form. But it also had special roots in American conditions. The economy of the United States had been undergoing rapid and violent changes, and they had brought with them not only the undermining of traditional beliefs and attitudes, but an intensification of class conflict. One did not need to read or believe in Marx to recognize the existence of the class struggle in the days of Homestead and Cripple Creek and Lawrence.

Even earlier, there had been an apocalyptic character in much of American radicalism. Utopian Socialists had felt, even more keenly than Theodore

* *The Socialist Party of America*. By David A. Shannon. Macmillan. \$4.50.

Roosevelt's more ardent followers did in 1912, that they stood at Armageddon and battled for the Lord. This expectation of immediate triumph was one of the great sources of strength of each movement in turn—while it lasted. But it also tended to produce a rapid disintegration when there was a major setback, or even a prolonged check, to the growth of a movement. This was true of the Populists and it was also true of the Socialist Party.

Revolution Around the Corner

This feeling that the revolution was just around the corner animated much of the Socialist literature of the first part of this century; Jack London's *Dream of Debs* and *Iron Heel* were the most vivid expressions of this sense of approaching crisis, but they were by no means the only ones. *The Iron Heel*, which became the most popular of London's books in Europe, is notable for the fact that it predicted the initial defeat of the American Socialists by a capitalist dictatorship; it is sometimes regarded as a prophecy of Fascism. It is interesting to note that it also predicted that William Randolph Hearst and his followers would be forced to become Socialists. Neither of these predictions seemed outlandish in 1907!

The slogan "Socialism in our Time" belongs to a later period; to most Socialists in 1912 it would not have occurred to speak in those terms, precisely because they had no doubt that it was due to happen. Morris Hillquit and Bill Haywood and Job Harriman and an Oklahoma sharecropper would certainly have defined socialism in different ways, but they all thought they saw it coming. (Thus Harriman, whom Shannon describes—correctly in terms of the internal party struggles of the period—as belonging to the right wing, was later involved in the Utopian Llano Colony in Louisiana.)

The Socialists in Louisiana

One specific point in regard to this period on which Shannon's account is in error is the Socialist strength in Louisiana. This he attributed to a sudden upsurge following a bitter lumber strike in 1911, and he says that it disappeared rapidly thereafter. But, in fact, the growth of the Socialist vote in Louisiana closely paralleled its growth in the country as a whole; the percentage increase in the Debs vote from 1908 to 1912 was actually a little less in Louisiana than it was nationally. And the drop after 1912 was attributable less to a decrease in Socialist sentiment than to the fact that the legislature, alarmed by the large

Socialist vote—probably, in view of the known vote counting methods of New Orleans, considerably larger than the officially recorded 7 per cent—changed the electoral law to remove the Socialists from the ballot. Certainly Socialist influence continued in the 1912 Socialist stronghold, the Parish of Winn, for a long time afterward—though its most important role may have been the rather ironical one of contributing to the shaping of Huey Long. Huey's mother was perhaps the leading Socialist of the area; when Jim Rorty visited Winnfield in the thirties, he found a couple of Huey's nonagenarian uncles on the Long side who still regarded themselves as Socialists, rather than as followers of their famous nephew.

Analyzing the 1912-13 Split

In his treatment of the 1912-1913 split in the party, resulting from the adoption of Section Six and the recall of Haywood from the National Committee, I think Professor Shannon overestimates the inevitability of the split and underestimates the damage that resulted from it. The differences between Haywood and Hillquit were if anything less than those which separated the syndicalist left and the Fabian right in the British Labor Party, yet in Britain they did not result in a split. (Of course, they played a role in the Communist split there. But by 1919 the differences of 1912, in England as in the United States, had been absorbed into a new pattern in which other elements were dominant.) Nor does the immediate drop in membership adequately reflect the loss in party strength; the most stable elements in terms of dues payments were at that time apt to be those (particularly in the foreign language federations) which were of the least value in terms of building Socialist influence. Those who dropped out, on the other hand, contained a relatively high proportion of the activists, and were most numerous in the areas where the indigenous character of the Party was strongest.

In his account of the war period, Professor Shannon gives a sympathetic picture of the persecutions the Socialist movement had to face. (It is surprising, incidentally, that in examining the reasons which led large numbers to desert the Socialists in 1916 to vote for Wilson, he does not mention the one which was more important than all the others put together—the fact that Wilson ran on the slogan "He kept us out of war.") He does not, however, give an adequate picture of Socialist activity during this period, or of the factors which entered into Socialist electoral successes.

Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of Socialist activity in the First World War was the extent to which it was channeled through non-party organizations. Some of these were trade union groups, such as the United Hebrew Trades in New York. The most important was the People's Council (modeled on the Russian Soviets), of which Louis P. Lochner was Executive Secretary and Rabbi Judah P. Magnes was Chairman. Both Lochner (who also organized the Ford Peace Ship) and Magnes were Socialists, although at the time they organized the People's Council they may not actually have been party members. (If they were not, however, they were certainly acting in collaboration with the party; the organizing Committee of the People's Council included Debs and Hillquit.) Prof. Shannon gives the People's Council a paragraph, which is at least better than Daniel Bell's failure to mention it. But its real importance as a medium of Socialist activity is more adequately indicated by the attention devoted to it in the Lusk Committee Report on Revolutionary Radicalism and Subversive Movements.

The Hillquit Vote of 1917

It is, I think, incorrect to regard the Hillquit vote of 1917 in New York as in any degree a municipal reform vote. It was primarily anti-war, and secondarily Socialist. The war, fulfilling Socialist prophecies and—together with the Russian Revolution—reviving the sense of an imminent collapse of capitalism, made much of the anti-war sentiment take on a radical Socialist form. American socialists—and to a large extent their supporters—identified themselves with the most radical sections of European Socialism. Thus in the 1917 campaign the late Gus Claessens referred to Hillquit as "the American Liebknecht."

There was also a straight anti-war vote which went to the Socialists without accepting any other aspects of their position; this was particularly large among the Irish-Americans. One of the most notable examples was Dudley Field Malone, sachem of Tammany Hall and son-in-law of New York's Senator O'Gorman, who resigned as Collector of the Port of New York and campaigned for Hillquit. But the greatest Socialist gains in New York were in the predominantly Jewish districts. In part, this was accounted for by the fact that these districts already had strong Socialist organizations capable of turning anti-war sentiment into Socialist votes and party membership; in this, of course, important roles were played by both the *Jewish Daily Forward* and the Socialist-organized unions in the needle trades and other industries with large numbers of Jewish workers.

The Opposition to War

The existence of strong anti-war sentiment among the Jewish workers was due partly to the fact that militarism in Europe had for most of them meant conscription for the armies of the Czar, and partly because the traditional anti-Semitism of Czarist Russia made that country the Number One enemy of most Jews. The March Revolution in Russia had relatively little effect on their attitude toward the war—not, as Professor Shannon suggests, because it received little publicity in America (it received a great deal), but because their sympathies almost automatically went to those groups in Russia who wanted to put an end to the Czar's war. (Professor Shannon mistakenly refers to the March Revolution as the "Menshevik Revolution"; the Mensheviks, of course, were not in the Provisional Government at first and never formed more than a small and relatively uninfluential part of it.)

Anti-war sentiment began to decline among them only after the German demands at Brest-Litovsk made it appear that the Kaiser wanted not peace, but the destruction of the revolution, and when the German armies supported such pogromists as the Ukrainian Hetman Skoropadsky. But this was very near the end of the war, and by that time the war policies of the Wilson administration had confirmed many in an opposition to the war which had originally been caused by other factors. (It is interesting to note that the Jewish voters who had come to the Socialists on the war issue did not automatically drop away when the war ended. It was, in fact, in the immediate postwar period that Socialist electoral successes in New York were greatest, and for some years afterward the old parties were able to carry certain districts only by coalescing. That—plus the usual vote-stealing devices which Tammany had developed in those days to a high point of perfection—was how Fiorello LaGuardia beat Scott Nearing for Congress in 1920.)

Evaluating Membership Figures

Despite official membership figures, however, the actual party membership did not keep pace with the increase in the vote. In dealing with this period—as well as with some others—Professor Shannon makes the mistake of taking party figures on dues payments at their face value as an indication of membership. But there can be little doubt that these figures were fraudulently inflated—perhaps as much as doubled—in the course of the postwar fight for party control. The frauds were worst in the foreign language federations

under left-wing leadership, but they also existed in other sections of the party.

Moreover, there were two factors which tended to make dues payments an inaccurate index of party membership even without actual fraud. During that fight, as during all party fights, many branches paid up the per capita for all their nominal members without waiting to collect their dues—which were often never paid. In addition, World War I and the first years after it saw a massive infiltration of every branch of the radical movement by police agents. In the Colyer deportation case, Federal Judge Anderson estimated that on a basis of the evidence before him, approximately one-third of the Communist Party's members were on the payroll of the Department of Justice.

The precipitous drop in membership of both the Socialist and Communist parties after the split was only in part the result of defections due to disillusion or persecution; it was largely the result of a return to the eternal verities of arithmetic. It should be noted that at no time in its history, even during its heyday in the Popular Front period, did the Communist Party ever attain the membership the Left Wing claimed in 1919. (Ruthenberg, for instance, claimed a membership of 20,000 in Cleveland!) On the other hand, it should also be noted that certain centers of Socialist strength where there was little interest in factional conflict—notably Milwaukee and later Bridgeport—have often paid per capita on a lower number of members than they have actually had. The same thing has, of course, frequently happened in the American trade union movement; thus there were periods when the United Mine Workers paid per capita on four or five times its actual membership, in order to maintain its voting strength, while other unions paid on far fewer members than they had, in order to keep the cash.

The Palmer Raid Era

On the whole, Professor Shannon's account of the Palmer period is a good one—although in stressing the legal aspects of the anti-Socialist drive he perhaps neglects the even more important wave of completely extra-legal violence which took place with official connivance. But he is incorrect in stating that "Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson cooperated with Palmer by zealously deporting alien radicals." Wilson (who had once been the leader of the Socialists in the miners' union) gave consistent support to the efforts of his Assistant Secretary in charge of immigration, the liberal and single-taxer Louis F. Post, to protect the victims of Palmer's raids wherever it was

legally possible to do so. (Perhaps Professor Shannon was misled by Harold Lord Varney's description of William Wilson as the "American Noske"; Varney's standards of accuracy at that time seem to have been no higher than they are today in his articles for the *American Mercury*.)

Indeed, the role of the Department of Labor in protecting alien radicals against the Department of Justice was just one of the paradoxes of the Wilson administration; thus, at the same time as that administration was persecuting Socialists, Nicholas Kelley was simultaneously an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and a member of the Board of Directors of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, later the League for Industrial Democracy.

Both in regard to the postwar period of reaction, and to the circumstances leading up to the Communist split, I think that Professor Shannon underestimates the plausibility of revolutionary prophecies in 1919. True, nobody in his right mind thought that the United States was going to have a revolution immediately. But, just as in the prewar period, there were many signs which could be interpreted as pointing toward one in the not too distant future. Notably, major labor struggles still tended to bear a close resemblance to small-scale civil wars.

Thus, the march of the coal miners of West Virginia on Logan and Mingo counties, which were controlled by the private armies of the non-union coal operators, was only halted by the summoning of a U.S. Army detachment of 2,000 men. And not only the great steel strike of 1919 but "normal" labor relations in the Pennsylvania minefields involved substantial bloodshed.

The Socialists of the Twenties

The Socialist movement in the twenties was, if anything, even deadlier than Professor Shannon indicates; the salient fact about it was that the bulk of its membership was in the Jewish Socialist Verband and other foreign language federations, notably the Finnish Federation and this membership had little political role outside of the city of New York. Most of the "locals" the party claimed at this time were actually Verband groups which existed in, and were often identical with, Workmen's Circle branches. They paid their dues and read the *Forward*, and on election day they voted Socialist if the ticket was on the ballot, but they did not function in the general community.

There was a considerable resemblance between the Socialist Party of that period and the Social Democratic Federation today—indeed, the latter consists

largely of the surviving members of the former; there was a close liaison with, but little practical influence on, the leaders of certain unions. These union officials were frequently party members, but seldom active ones; increasingly, the members of the unions they led lost interest in Socialist politics. (I can remember attending one May Day meeting in Madison Square Garden, to which ten thousand garment workers had been marched from their shops; they listened dutifully to the speakers—a task made easier for them by the public address system, which effectively smothered the words of all except the stentorian Jacob Pan-ken. But when it came time to sing the International, the silence was deafening.)

The Support of La Follette

It is doubtful whether the Socialist support of La Follette played any great part in the party's decline in this period, although this is the traditional view and Professor Shannon accepts it. Rather, I think it may be said that the party's participation in the La Follette campaign temporarily halted an already advanced process of disintegration; the failure of the campaign to lead to anything in the way of a permanent organization left the party weak and demoralized—but no more so than it would have been in any case. Professor Shannon also overestimates the extent of the Socialist revival before the depression.

Only in New York City had there been an influx of new members on a significant scale, in connection with the Thomas mayoralty campaign of 1929. Technically, most of the new recruits even here joined the party after the stock market crash; actually, however, they joined because of personal admiration for Norman Thomas or enthusiasm for overdue municipal reform. The political effects of the depression were not felt till later.

The Thomas vote in 1929 was highest in the more prosperous districts, and came to a considerable extent from Republicans who disliked their own candidate, Fiorello LaGuardia; the new party members came almost entirely from among middle-class intellectuals. The members recruited as a result of the depression, on the other hand, included many workers and farmers, and a substantial number of the unemployed. Professor Shannon, I think, underestimates the labor and farmer support the Socialist Party had in 1932; certainly it was less than in the days before 1913, but I do not think it represented a smaller proportion of the party's strength.

In discussing the splits and factional maneuvers in the Socialist Party during the thirties, I am afraid that Prof. Shannon has got himself almost as

confused as his account will leave the uninformed reader. For this, he is perhaps not to blame; the jungle in which he has got lost is one which is almost impenetrable to anyone who did not actually go through it—as well as to many who did. But he is certainly wrong in describing both the Militants and the Old Guard as "Marxists," since there were plenty of non-Marxists in both. Nor is he justified in suggesting that there was anything left-wing or erratic about appearing in blue shirts and red ties—a uniform borrowed from the European Socialist parties and fully approved by the right-wing party leadership in New York—or in the party's official clenched-fist salute; while Louis Waldman eventually developed an allergy to these symbols, it was not shared by other right-wingers, and even Louis didn't discover their pernicious character until very late in the day.

Again, he confuses the primary fight for control of the "legal" party organization in New York—a fight which had to do only with recognition by the state—and the fight for control of the party's membership organization in the state, which was decided by the national convention. This may also account for his belief that the drop in party membership started before the Old Guard left the party; he bases this on the dues figures for 1935, but the New York Old Guard was already withholding dues payments in 1935.

The Communist Front Issue

Professor Shannon is also wrong in his description of the subsequent factional disputes in the party. The support which the Clarity group got from the party membership was based not on any of the "left" phraseology some of its leaders used, but simply on the fact that it was uncompromisingly anti-Stalinist. (In a complete misinterpretation of the fight within the party on relations with the American League against War and Fascism, Professor Shannon depicts David Lasser and Meta Berger as champions of the rights of individual party members—when they were merely championing the right of members to take part in Communist fronts.) Indeed, opposition to the Communist Party was far more important to most Socialists in the later thirties and the forties than any purely theoretical question; though Professor Shannon fails to mention it, the Socialists were the center of organized resistance to the Communist drive to take over the CIO as well as various individual unions.

He is also in error in his description of the Socialist Party in recent years. For whatever may be said of the party today, its weakness does not lie in any attempt to impose a "pure" doctrine. Much more, it lies in the fact that American Socialists are today

engaged in a reexamination of their traditional beliefs. It is a reexamination which was already beginning in the thirties; the realities of Fascism and Communism forced it. The need for it has been intensified by subsequent developments, notably the experience of the British Labor government.

The basic values for which Socialists have fought remain valid, but they offer only the criteria by which a program must be judged, not the program itself. Most of the criticisms Socialists have directed against the present order are sound in substance, although they require revision in detail. But the solutions on which Socialists used to rely are inadequate to many

problems of the present; it is, indeed, evident in retrospect that they were not really adequate to all the problems of the past.

Other Socialist parties today face much the same difficulty. But where a mass party can hold its following on the basis of interests without satisfying all their intellectual requirements, it is difficult for the American Socialist Party to recruit members or appeal to voters when it is unwilling to offer them certainties. Organizationally, the American Socialist Party might be better off if it actually were a sect, as Professor Shannon believes it to be. But in that case it would really be dead.

Workmen's Circle Branch 155
Toledo, Ohio

Poretz Branch 705
Workmen's Circle
Dorchester, Mass.

Paul Kerber
Dearborn, Mich.

Workmen's Circle Branch 207 & 207B
Atlanta, Ga.

Joseph Bold
Penn. Penna.

Edward Garber
Los Angeles, Cal.

Anthony Jakubiszyn
Caro, Mich.

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Arlington, Va.

Lloyd D. Somers
Rochester, N. Y.

Grace & Morris Milgram
Philadelphia, Penna.

In memory of Fanny Milgram
Workmen's Circle Branch 671E
Cleveland, Ohio

Edmund Hare
Philadelphia, Penna.

Vladock Branch 699
Workmen's Circle
Miami, Fla.
Jacob Fisch, Fin. Secy.

Carlo Larese
Romeo Dada
Pietro Rinaldi
Erie, Pa.

Knute Evertz
Bellingham, Wash.

Benjamin Cardozo Branch 440E
Workmen's Circle
Chicago, Ill.
B. Sandroff, Secy.

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from the Members and Friends of the Socialist Party of Massachusetts

S. P. of Mass.

Local Boston

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Workmen's Circle Branch 918

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Arthur, Evelyn and Johanna Bernstein

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ackerman

Henry Fine

Ben and Esther Feldstein

Edith Eisenberg

Ralph and June Roberts

Ida Klitzman

Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Shipman

Joseph Shipman

Lee Goldberg

Sam and Sophie Levin

John Keil

Mr. and Mrs. William Fisch

Mr. and Mrs. A. Shapiro

Abe Anonymous

Louis Anonymous

Julius and Bess Bernstein

Stanley and Eugene Bernstein

Phil Anonymous

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lyons

Saul Friedman

Louis Peter

Celia Glaser

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